



General Assembly

Fifty-second session

Official Records

Distr.: General
13 February 1998
English
Original: French

Second Committee

Summary record of the 27th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 3 November 1997, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. de Rojas (Venezuela)

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97-82454 (E)



The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 97: Sustainable development and international economic cooperation (continued)

(g) Women in development (A/52/300, A/52/345, A/52/413)

(h) Human resources development (A/52/413, A/52/540)

1. **Ms. King** (Assistant Secretary-General, Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women) introduced agenda item 97 (g) and the report on the effective mobilization and integration of women in development (A/52/345), which focused on mainstreaming a gender perspective into economic policies.

2. The report was based on previous reports; the Beijing Platform for Action of 1995; the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, particularly its agreed conclusion 1997/3 on women and the economy; and agreed conclusion 1997/1 of the Economic and Social Council. The idea that gender equality was an objective for which society as a whole bore responsibility meant that, *inter alia*, ministries of justice, finance and the economy, all the entities of the United Nations system and all the delegations to the Main Committees of the General Assembly – not only the Third Committee – must consider the impact of their policy decisions on women, rather than leave the task of the advancement of women to women-specific entities only. United Nations bodies, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), had already decided to make gender equality and the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in their programmes and projects a priority. The World Bank had done so as well.

3. Consideration of the three topics specifically identified in the report (the integration of unpaid work into policies, gender and fiscal policies and gender and trade liberalization policies) brought out that gender inequality was frequently perpetuated by economic processes and that gender-based factors had an impact on the outcomes of many economic policies.

4. It was sufficient to cite two examples in that regard. First, owing to the correlation between unemployment and fertility rates, girls' education was an essential macroeconomic variable. And yet, their education was constrained by the rigid division of labour in the household, whereby women were required to perform a great many tasks. In order to develop girls' education, investments in

other sectors were necessary as well. Moreover, how could women farmers, who had access to neither education, economic resources or credit, take advantage of incentives used by Governments to modernize the agricultural sector? Analyses in that regard were still woefully incomplete and must be pursued.

5. An effective economic growth policy must include investments in women and girls as human capital, on a par with men and boys. Preconditions for the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in economic policies included the adoption of the measures necessary to achieve gender equality in economic decision-making, particularly in international development agencies; the generation of reliable statistics disaggregated by sex; and methodologies for gender analysis.

6. It was to be hoped that the Second Committee would take into account the mainstreaming of a gender dimension in development planning during its consideration of all the items on its agenda.

7. **Mr. Lawrence** (United Nations Development Programme) said that the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-second session on the implementation of resolution 50/105, concentrating on further action taken by the United Nations system, especially with regard to inter-agency coordination.

8. The report (A/52/540) highlighted two recent and interesting developments relating, on the one hand, to the efforts under way within the United Nations system to coordinate assistance to countries in the follow-up to the major global conferences, and, on the other, to the package of United Nations reform proposals announced by the Secretary-General, which was being implemented.

9. The establishment of inter-agency task forces in 1995 had resulted in enhanced inter-agency cooperation. Particularly noteworthy with regard to human resources development had been the folding together of the educational and health sectors into Commitment VI of the Declaration adopted at the World Summit for Social Development, which had elicited important interaction between the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), published in August 1997, was another major contribution to country-level follow-up. Emphasis had been placed on enhanced participation by civil society in governance systems; the work of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Basic Social Services, led by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), had given new operational meaning to that more intersectoral approach. The 20/20

principle was beginning to become operational in a number of countries through the work of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

10. Various innovative themes bore directly on human resources development policies and practice, particularly the reappraisal of production and consumption patterns on the basis of the concept of sustainable livelihoods put forward by UNDP, which was a useful framework for strategies that could guide human resources development.

11. The need to improve livelihoods required holistic and more systematic thinking about the sectors involved in human resources development. Strategies for sustainable livelihoods must be absorbed by local communities, governance structures and civil society as a whole. The overarching nature of that concept made it particularly relevant; it was a concept that could offer new direction to the struggle against poverty. However, it must also be remembered that it was one of the new concepts that countries and United Nations agencies were only beginning to examine and implement.

12. UNDP had proposed the initial definitions of the term "sustainable livelihoods" in a note prepared for the Inter-Agency Task Force on Employment and Sustainable Livelihoods. The Assembly could recommend that an additional, more detailed report on the implementation of resolution 50/105 should be undertaken in 1997-1998.

13. **Mr. Schumacher** (Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union and the associate countries of Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, and also Norway, thanked the Secretary-General for the practical recommendations contained in his report (A/52/345) while noting that it was essential to intensify efforts to promote gender equality and access of women to production resources. Indeed, women's empowerment was an essential factor in the struggle against poverty. It was clear that, in order to be effective, an economic development strategy must take into account the contribution of women and create the necessary conditions in order to enable women to fulfil their potential on an equal footing with men.

14. As noted in the report all economic policies should contribute to the goal of gender equality and States must take steps to facilitate the access of women to economic resources, health services and education, which were prerequisites for such equality. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) should continue their action at every level in the area of gender equality. The

agreed conclusions adopted by the Economic and Social Council on the issue of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system were very welcome in that regard.

15. Turning to the issue of human resources development, he said that the European Union deplored the late issuance of document A/52/540; the issue was extremely important because sustainable development presupposed human development. The European Union believed that primary education, in particular for young girls, and primary health care should be given the greatest attention. It was regrettable to see that women accounted for two thirds of the illiterates in the world since they thus remained excluded from the progress made towards the achievement of the goals of the World Conference on Education for All. Enhancing human resources development would depend on the political will of each State, sustained, if need be, by external assistance.

16. **Ms. Hall** (United States of America) said that in accordance with the Platform for Action adopted in Beijing, the United States Agency for International Development had taken steps to integrate gender into the planning stage of economic policies, because addressing gender issues only at the implementation stage meant addressing only the impacts of economic forces on women, rather than acknowledging the key role women played in shaping those forces. It was therefore necessary to systematically improve women's economic opportunities and legal rights and to make the general public aware that that was in everyone's general interest.

17. The President's Interagency Council for Women, which oversaw United States implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, had formed a working group on global economic issues in order to enhance understanding of the many ways in which the concerns of women intersected with policies so that all members of society could benefit from economic changes.

18. The Secretary-General's report highlighted the impact of unpaid work on the economy: the United States believed that ignoring the value of unpaid work, particularly in countries where the informal sector was very large, undercut efforts to enhance overall economic productivity. The United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics was assessing the feasibility of conducting a survey to measure non-market work. Her Government believed that in the long term the increased income-earning capacity of women resulting from trade liberalization would encourage families to invest more in the education and health of their children, thereby increasing their ability to be productive members of society.

19. The importance of women's education to economic growth was no longer in doubt. The likelihood of children being enrolled in school increased with their mother's education level; failing to invest in the education of girls lowered the gross national product.

20. The United States therefore supported the Secretary-General's recommendation that the gender perspective should be incorporated into policy development as well as the programme design, implementation and evaluation processes; that measures should be taken to achieve gender balance in economic decision-making; that an enabling environment should be created to allow women to express their needs; and that the collection of gender disaggregated data should be improved.

21. **Mr. Savostianov** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation attached very great importance to human resources development and to increasing the role of civil society in development. When assisting countries in transition the United Nations system should draw its inspiration from those considerations and from the implementation of the decisions of major conferences such as the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and Habitat II. He congratulated the funds and programmes responsible for operational activities for development of the United Nations system for the assistance they had provided in that area.

22. Unfortunately, his delegation could not say any more or comment on the Secretary-General's report (A/52/540) because, as all too often happened, the document had not been issued on time; that was most regrettable.

23. His delegation attached great importance to the effective participation of women in development and it welcomed the agreed conclusions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its summer session regarding the mainstreaming of the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, for they contained specific recommendations that could provide guidance for United Nations action.

24. In its resolution 50/104, the General Assembly had urged Governments to develop methodologies for incorporating a gender perspective into all aspects of policy-making. The report of the Secretary-General (A/52/345) contained practical recommendations on the subject, which could be used both by countries and by the United Nations system.

25. **Ms. Gui Ying** (China) said that women were an important force in human development and that it would be difficult to achieve economic and social development

without their effective participation. Since the Fourth World Conference on Women, the international community had gained deep insight into the role played by women in development and had sought to facilitate the solution of problems facing women and to further their advancement and participation in development. But that goal was still far off in some regions of the world where conditions were not yet favourable for women's participation in development.

26. Her Government attached great importance to gender equality and to the effective participation of women in the political, economic and social area. It hoped that Governments and the international community would honour the commitments they had made at the Beijing Conference by bolstering women's full participation in the development process. The United Nations system should continue to play an active role in that regard.

27. A major goal of the Chinese Government was human resources development. Educated and qualified personnel represented the most important resource for both scientific and technological progress and economic and social development. China's modernization depended to a large extent on human resources development, which was why China was currently giving priority attention to education, especially vocational training, and was implementing policies that encouraged and rewarded talent. China must improve the quality of its immense human resources to prepare them for the requirements of its "open-up" policy, technological progress and structural adjustment and to promote the socialist cause in the twenty-first century.

28. It was to be hoped that the United Nations system would continue to pay priority attention to the human resources development of developing countries and to promote international cooperation in that field.

29. **Mr. Wilmot** (Ghana) said that mainstreaming the gender perspective in economic policies was only one means of integrating women into development. In that regard, the report (A/52/345) put too little emphasis on the national and international action required to promote the role of women in decision-making, education and training. Yet, women in developing countries could not benefit from measures to mainstream the gender perspective in economic policies until they were adequately educated and trained. Moreover, the report gave the impression that all women faced the same challenges, and it failed to take account of diversity in the various regions and in levels of development. Henceforth, it would be desirable to adopt a more integrated approach by including linkages between the subject under study and the other items before the Committee. The comments just made were not intended in any way to play down the

importance of mainstreaming the gender perspective in economic policies.

30. It should be emphasized that leaving women out of the development process meant reducing significantly a country's potential to achieve its development goals. It was therefore necessary that women should be educated and trained in much the same way as men were, in order to promote their role in development and to facilitate the active participation of all people in the social, economic and political process. Accordingly, steps must be taken to enable girls and women to acquire the necessary skills to adapt to a changing socio-economic context and, particularly in the developing countries, to follow courses in science and technology. Women should participate on an equal footing with men in all areas of the decision-making process, and reforms to remedy inequities and discrimination, especially in the workplace, should be undertaken. Gender issues should be mainstreamed in all development policies and programmes, women should be encouraged to fill leadership positions, agencies responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effects of programmes promoting women should be strengthened, and implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action should be accelerated. Lastly, United Nations bodies should strengthen their integrated approach in promoting women, and technical support should be provided to Governments in their efforts to integrate gender concerns into national policies.

31. **Mr. Hettes** (Slovakia) said that globalization was creating tensions which threatened social stability and which should be remedied through social advances. The countries in transition in particular should, in parallel with their economic reforms, undertake the transformation of their social system. Accordingly, since 1989, and in 1993 in particular, a series of legislative standards had been adopted in Slovakia with a view to reconstructing labour relations, reforming the welfare system and remedying employment problems. The State guaranteed all citizens the right to a decent income and to an allowance if they lost their job.

32. Extreme poverty, even in the remotest region, threatened the future of every country, because no country was sufficiently far off or powerful to be able to live in isolation. The international community must therefore take action to promote people-centred sustainable development. To that end, his delegation was prepared to support any proposal aimed at eradicating poverty. The two root problems facing mankind at the end of the century were extreme poverty and unemployment; it would be inexcusable not to find the political will to solve what was technically solvable.

33. It was regrettable that the international community did not seem able to fulfil the commitments made at world summits; such fulfilment was nevertheless indispensable if the activities of the United Nations system were to be reoriented towards more sustainable human development. In particular, a more active role by the Economic and Social Council was called for.

34. **Ms. Heyzer** (Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)), reporting on the work of UNIFEM to promote women's economic and political empowerment, said that UNIFEM encouraged women to become key economic players in order to combat feminized poverty and redirect market forces that often ignored gender considerations. UNIFEM also sought to intervene in economic decision-making so that policies did not negatively affect women's livelihoods, to strengthen the capability of women's organizations to defend women's interests and carry out action plans that helped them take advantage of trade globalization and new technologies.

35. After reviewing programmes and initiatives which UNIFEM had launched and supported in Africa, Asia and Latin America, she said that the Fund had organized events relating to women and international trade and had implemented projects to encourage women to set up small enterprises and to facilitate women's access to credit.

36. There were six ways of advancing gender mainstreaming among United Nations agencies and between the United Nations system and its government and civil society partners: establishing inter-agency thematic groups on women's empowerment; developing gender action plans and indicators of gender equality and women's empowerment; putting in place multi-donor coordination mechanisms; setting up standing advisory groups made up of experts from government, non-governmental organizations, women's groups and academia; building capacity in gender-impact analysis and gender-sensitive programming for United Nations staff and for personnel from government and non-governmental organizations; and increasing awareness and accountability on the part of all members of the United Nations country teams, including the resident coordinator, with a view to their promoting and supporting programmes to achieve women's empowerment and gender equality. In that regard, UNIFEM had decided to dispatch to the field an increased number of advisers and gender specialists who would strengthen the United Nations system's capacity to integrate gender mainstreaming into its policies and programmes.

37. **Ms. Yoo** (Republic of Korea) said that the economic worth of women's work was undervalued, that there was

insufficient investment in the human capital represented by women, and that there were serious restrictions on their access to productive resources such as land, credit and technology, which prevented them from participating in economic life. States must take account of the fact that 70 per cent of the poor in the developing countries were women. Poverty would not be eliminated or sustainable development achieved without the participation of women in the development process on an equal footing with men. To that end, it was important to incorporate a gender perspective in the formulation of policies, especially economic ones.

38. Her country welcomed the Secretary-General's report (A/52/345) but would have preferred it to spell out concrete measures which might be taken by the United Nations system to integrate women in development. The Korean authorities had prepared a five-year plan which would help to mainstream a gender perspective in economic policies. In addition, her Government had already initiated a series of measures to secure the economic empowerment of women by offering incentives to companies to re-hire women after maternity leave. It had also identified pragmatic ways of helping women entrepreneurs by offering them tax breaks, setting quotas for women in the allocation of resources, and enacting a law on assistance for businesses run by women. All those measures ought to enhance the incalculable role of women in the Korean economy.

39. Human resources development was a central component of her Government's development cooperation policy. Since 1995 the Republic of Korea had provided training for some 3,200 persons from developing countries and had contributed to the establishment of vocational training centres in various African countries. Human resources development was an essential component of sustainable development. Governments must invest in their human resources if they wished to take advantage of the globalization of trade and international economic competition. As part of its international cooperation activities for development the United Nations system should do more to help countries to promote human resources development. South-South cooperation was also important in that regard. There was likewise a need to promote human resources development based on gender equality.

40. **Mr. Yoshino (Japan)** said that his delegation supported the formulation of a preliminary framework for action, as recommended by the Secretary-General in his report (A/52/345) and hoped that Governments would take the necessary steps to promote the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in their economic policies. If the developing countries wished to bring an end to their difficulties, they must offer women the opportunity to put their abilities to full

use at every stage of the development process. Unfortunately, women constituted 70 per cent of the illiterate population and were the first victims of inequality.

41. Improvement of the situation of women required a two-pronged approach. First, programmes directly targeting women must be introduced, especially programmes to increase the enrolment of girls in school, to provide micro-credit to enterprises run by women, and to improve the judicial system so as to foster the participation of women. Second, the gender perspective must be incorporated in development programmes from the programming to the evaluation stage, in order to ensure that they had a positive impact on women. That meant that women must participate in the formulation of the programmes and in their implementation and evaluation.

42. In its official development assistance Japan gave high priority to the role of women in development. Since 1995 it had contributed about \$5 million to the UNDP funds allocated to the participation of women in development in order to help the developing countries to improve the status of women and rectify gender disparities. His country strongly believed that the United Nations system should mainstream the gender perspective in all its operational activities and that its funds and programmes should offer technical support to the developing countries at the field level. There was also a need to devise indicators to monitor and assess the situation of women in the developing countries.

43. **Mr. Prendergast (Jamaica)** said that human resources played a primary role in sustainable development. Efforts must therefore be made to satisfy the basic needs of individuals and, in particular, to improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable groups by making a commitment to health, food and housing, as well as to education and training. Human resources development implied strengthening inter-sectoral linkages and giving attention to the macroeconomic context. It was worrying that development assistance had fallen to pre-1990 levels.

44. Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States was crucial to human resources development. It was not just a question of improving women's education and health but also of enabling them to participate actively in creating resources, increasing productivity and taking decisions.

45. Jamaica and the other countries of the Caribbean had few resources but they knew it was important to meet the needs of their peoples and develop their human resources if they were not to jeopardise their development. Accordingly, they pooled their resources, both human and natural, and

tried to maximize their capabilities. To that end they had opened university institutions and created regional research institutes.

46. The countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) had undertaken to nurture the development of each person's potential without regard to gender, develop a culture of entrepreneurship, protect the environment, promote research, and improve the competitiveness of their industries.

47. It was important for all individuals to have an equal opportunity of realizing their potential. The same was true of countries: the small States must be properly represented in the relevant social organs.

48. **Mr. El Kouhene** (World Food Programme) said that the mandate of the World Food Programme (WFP) covered the eradication of hunger and poverty. Gender statistics were very clear on the disproportionate effects of hunger and poverty on women, even though it was women who produced most of the food and were largely responsible for feeding the household. WFP therefore considered the empowerment of women to be essential to development and to food security in particular; women should play a more active role in social change and development by taking responsibility for the management and allocation of food aid. The action plans adopted by WFP were designed to ensure gender equality and give women a stronger voice in local decision-making about food aid. It had invited its governmental and non-governmental partners to take the same approach, and that policy was bearing fruit.

49. Investing in women's literacy was also an excellent means of helping families to cope with difficult conditions, for improvement of literacy rates among women was accompanied by improvements in health and nutrition, lower fertility rates, and more active participation by women in economic life and production. WFP projects also covered vocational training and sought to provide women with the means to succeed. With a view to transparency, the projects provided gender-disaggregated data and specified what proportion of the resources was directly allocated to women and how progress would be monitored. All the WFP regional bureaux had produced case studies on gender gaps and were trying to eliminate such gaps by means of innovative approaches, especially in Latin America. Since women and their young children were the first to suffer in the event of crop failures or political disturbances, WFP believed that they must be the first to benefit from food aid.

50. **Mrs. Bohara** (Nepal) said that investment in the education and training of women contributed to national development since women accounted for half of the human

resources and, given the opportunity, could perform on a par with men in the political, economic and social spheres. She acknowledged the contribution of the United Nations system to the cause of women, in particular, the convening of world conferences (in Mexico, Nairobi and Beijing) and its efforts to mainstream the gender perspective into economic policies (A/52/345). An enabling environment which permitted women to play a greater role in achieving sustainable human development would eventually contribute to peace, democracy and good governance.

51. Her country was fully aware of the need to integrate women in the political, economic and social spheres of national development and had established its ninth five-year plan (1997-2002) around three themes: integrating women in development, eliminating gender inequality and facilitating access for women to education, technology and communications. An effective mechanism would be established to ensure the coordination of various development activities for women. Her country also had established a Ministry of Women and Social Welfare and had adopted a number of specific measures to increase the participation of women: general and technical education programmes, compulsory appointment of female teachers in primary and secondary schools, immunization and family planning programmes and population education. Women must be more involved in management and decision-making; otherwise, the equality between men and women envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations would remain a myth.

52. **Mr. Mor** (Israel) said that of the 800 million people living in absolute poverty, a figure which was expected to exceed 900 million by the year 2000, there were a disproportionately high number of women, and female-led households were among the poorest. Yet women produced half the food in some developing countries, comprised one fourth of the workforce in industry and one third of the workforce in services. The participation of women in development not only was essential for reasons of social justice, but also was a factor in the effort to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development. Women still faced many barriers, including inadequate investment in education and health, limited access to services and to the means of production, and legal constraints. That situation must be remedied and women must be encouraged to achieve their full potential in society, in the economic and political spheres alike.

53. The status of women in Israel reflected the diversity of the human mosaic: some held high positions while others were traditional homemakers. Economic empowerment of women and entrepreneurship offered a partial solution to the problems of poverty and unemployment. There also was a

vast network of national women's organizations and women were represented at the highest levels.

54. Looking back at the Beijing Conference, it was important to consider what practical steps could be taken to reduce bias and enhance parity in the workplace, in education, in the fields of health and law, and in public life in general.

55. **Mrs. Galindo** (Colombia) said that despite the many declarations and resolutions concerning the role of women in development, they continued to be the victims of discrimination, in particular, with respect to access to education, land, capital, technology and opportunities to engage in productive activity, all of which were factors which prevented them from benefiting from the development process. The resolutions adopted by the General Assembly during the 1990s focused on the human component of development and on incorporating the gender perspective in policies. The globalization of the world economy and structural adjustment programmes had a more negative impact on women than on men. To begin with, women were likely to be living in poverty, particularly female heads of household, who earned only one salary, which was often lower than that of men, and held less important jobs. Moreover, women often were compelled to work in the informal sector, in dangerous circumstances. Lastly, women were represented in the labour market in greater numbers than in the past and in development in general, but on an unequal footing. It was therefore necessary to improve the status of women, ensure the more equitable distribution of wealth, create jobs and improve the quality of education.

56. **Mr. Andjaba** (Namibia), speaking on behalf of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), said that the countries members of SADC were convinced that mainstreaming the gender perspective was one way to enhance development in the region. Disparities between men and women persisted with respect to legal rights, power sharing, decision-making, access to the means of production, education and health. Women's full and equal participation in development must be guaranteed. The countries members of SADC therefore were determined to amend all laws which discriminated against women, enhance access to quality education, eliminate gender stereotyping and improve access to health services, including reproductive services. It was necessary to find effective ways to empower women and enable them to become equal partners in development. To that end, it was necessary to eliminate such obstacles as hunger, poverty and illiteracy and problems relating to health and housing. Lastly, the education and training of women and girls were essential.

57. Such a wide-ranging issue required a balanced approach, which could not be provided in a report submitted only every two years. The Community proposed a report concentrating on fewer areas, such as "the education and training of women in the process of globalization" in order to facilitate consideration of the item. Lastly, its members hoped that the Committee would adopt a practical resolution.

58. **Mrs. Fahmy** (Egypt) said that her country attached considerable importance to the development of women, had allocated \$1.2 billion in its most recent five-year plan for programmes to benefit women and had made women a major focus of the plan for 1997-2001, since it believed that the development of women should be pursued in the context of the development of society as a whole.

59. With regard the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/345, which had been submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 50/104, she said that the report dealt with only one aspect of the resolution, namely, mainstreaming a gender perspective into economic policies, and did not cover other matters, including international cooperation or progress made in the implementation of measures called for by the General Assembly. The report did not provide any examples other than the analysis of national budgets in section B, and it mentioned only two countries, Australia and South Africa. Part III of the report provided an unduly brief analysis of the impact of trade liberalization policies and failed to establish any link between the decline in the female workforce, for example, and the international economic environment. Moreover, the report provided no details on ways to encourage women to participate in development and offered no guidelines with respect to poverty eradication.

60. It was essential to improve the status of women, in particular, through training and technical assistance. Her delegation hoped that the resolutions of the Second Committee on international cooperation for development and on operational activities for development would emphasize the need actively to involve women in the development process. Her delegation therefore requested the Secretariat to submit a report to Member States in two years indicating the reasons why the participation of women had been given only superficial treatment: reference was made only to enhancing the potential of women, while nothing was said about external factors which might affect development and the benefits which women, and even men, derived from the development process.

61. **Ms. Ben Yedder** (Tunisia) said that the Secretary-General's report (A/52/345) contained many points of interest concerning measures to be taken at the national

level, including economic policies specifically oriented towards women, but it had overlooked the role of multilateral donors. That omission should be corrected in the next report.

62. The importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective in the implementation of development programmes had been affirmed in the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, adopted at Beijing in 1995, and at the latest session of the Economic and Social Council. Tunisia welcomed the role played by the United Nations in that regard, including the increased attention paid within the Organization to the status of women, particularly in the areas of economic and social development. At the recent global conferences the international community had devoted a substantial part of its recommendations, resolutions and decisions to all aspects of women's issues. Tunisia attached particular importance to women's participation in development; it therefore considered the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action a priority.

63. Tunisia was determined to make an irreversible commitment to integrated and sustainable development. It therefore sought above all to bring about equality of opportunity, so that legal equality should be truly anchored in the everyday life of women and society. The right to work – which was a basic right – had been reaffirmed for all women. The labour code expressly asserted the principle of non-discrimination between men and women at work and the State had adopted measures to benefit women in the vital sectors of education, health and family planning. An educational reform was in hand, aiming principally to teach young people to reject any form of sex discrimination or segregation. Action on family planning, which came under the primary health-care programmes, had enabled Tunisia to achieve the lowest population growth rate in Africa. The policy was directed at women's well-being, their physical and mental health and the validation of their role in the family. That active policy to benefit women had brought about a qualitative change in women's economic contribution to the country's development. Recently published figures showed increasing participation – both qualitative and quantitative – by women in economic life not only in agriculture but also in industry, where women accounted for over 40 per cent of workers, in administration (25 per cent) and in public life (16 per cent of municipal councilors were women). Numbers were also rising fast in the magistracy, where a quarter of a century earlier there had been virtually no women.

64. National efforts should be consolidated in order to achieve the objectives outlined in the plans of action of the major international conferences. They should, however, be

backed by adequate international support, as stated in General Assembly resolution 50/104. She recalled the main points of the resolution and took the opportunity to urge the international financial institutions, bilateral donors and regional development banks to implement policies that would support national efforts for the advancement of women. She commended the activities of the World Food Programme, with its commitment to reducing gender disparities, welcomed the activities of the United Nations Development Programme aimed at improving women's access to credit and resources, and also mentioned the useful activities carried out by UNESCO.

65. **Mr. Al Hitti (Iraq)** noted that the two reports under consideration (A/52/300 and A/52/345) dealt mainly with activities at the microeconomic level and largely ignored the macroeconomic aspects, the implication being that all that was needed in order to improve the status of women was to change the social structures, including religious traditions. That would be seriously to underestimate both macroeconomic factors and external factors. The latter – which also affected the former – included the lack of real North-South cooperation and the imposition of unjust coercive measures, such as economic sanctions, against some countries, resulting in a serious deterioration in their economic situation. Such a deterioration inevitably led to a reduction in the living standards of women, inasmuch as women were an active element within the family.

66. The status of women in Iraq had been affected by the fallout from the general deterioration of the economic situation caused by the imposition of unjustified sanctions. A similar situation existed in other countries such as the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Cuba, which were suffering the consequences of the sanctions imposed against them; the acute crisis prevailing in the Great Lakes region of Africa was also relevant in that context. The complex situations caused by sanctions prompted him to ask the Secretariat to include in future reports on the status of women an analysis of the international factors that might jeopardize national approaches to the advancement of women.

67. **Mr. Al-Mulla (Kuwait)**, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that Iraq should implement in full the Security Council decisions relating to it. In particular it should repatriate Kuwaiti citizens who had been forcibly removed to Iraq and return the property stolen from Kuwait. By observing all the provisions of Security Council resolutions Iraq could progressively improve its economic situation, and particularly the status of Iraqi women.

68. **Mr. Al Hitti** (Iraq), speaking in exercise of reply, wondered why the representative of Kuwait had taken the floor, since his country had not even been mentioned.

69. **Mr. Al-Mulla** (Kuwait) insisted that his remarks had been pertinent and recalled his country's two demands, which were in accordance with the dictates of the international community, namely that Kuwaiti citizens seized in their country and held in Iraq should be repatriated and that property taken from Kuwait should be returned.

Agenda item 96: Sectoral policy questions (*continued*)

(b) Business and development

Draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.13

70. **Mr. Winnick** (United States of America) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.13, entitled "Business and development", which aimed to focus the work of the United Nations on the role of the private sector in sustainable development. The preamble was brief, in accordance with the new guidelines. The draft resolution also dealt with the question of corruption and bribery. Much remained to be done on those two issues, since consensus had not yet been achieved. The efforts of the United Nations in that regard were therefore pertinent and useful. The draft resolution covered several other topics, including the informal sector, micro-credit and the Partners for Development initiative of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. He suggested that the draft resolution should be adopted by consensus and invited other countries to become sponsors.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.